

**Andrew Jackson and Isaac Shelby to John Caldwell Calhoun, October 30, 1818, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.**

**JACKSON AND ISAAC SHELBY TO SECRETARY CALHOUN.1**

1 Copy.

Nashville, October 30, 1818.

*Sir:* We had the pleasure on the 23d inst. to address you, in which we made known to you that on the 19th we had the good fortune to conclude a treaty with the Chickasaw nation of Indians, by which they have ceded to the United States all claim or title to the land within the States of Kentucky and Tennessee.

To show you the disposition of the Indians and the determination of the Chiefs, neither to exchange or sell any part of their land, before we entered the Nation or met them in council; we beg leave to refer you to the letter of James Colbert of the 17th July, 1818 in answer to one written by Genl. Jackson on behalf of the Commissioners, announcing to the Nation that we had been appointed by the President of the United States to treat with the Chickasaw Nation for a purchase or exchange of land; which letter is herewith enclosed, and marked A. and to show you how we managed this discussion from its commencement, we beg leave to refer you to General Jackson's letter of the 24th of July,<sup>2</sup> written in behalf of the Commissioners marked B, which induced Major James Colbert, the interpreter of the nation to write the General of date the 8th of August appointing the time and place for holding the treaty, which communication is marked C, and to which we beg leave to refer you.

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2 In stating the objects for which the commissioners were appointed to make the treaty, Calhoun wrote to Jackson, May 2, 1818, saying, "The President anticipates from your weight of character and knowledge of the Indians that the object in view will be effected". For the treaty see Kappler's *Indian Treaties*, II. 174.

We reached the Treaty Ground on the 29th Sept. and for a detailed account of our whole proceedings pending this negociation we beg leave to refer you to the journal signed by Col: Robert Butler, our Secretary and approved by us, which document accompanies the treaty, and will be handed to you by Col Robert Butler whom we have charged with its safe delivery, and for which service we hope you will allow him the pay of Secretary and his expenses; we could not think of trusting so valuable a paper to the conveyance of a mail.

You will see from the documents referred to, that we soon found (to be successful) we must address ourselves to their fears and indulge their avarice. The goods subject to our control would not answer this purpose, and if they had they could not have been used without discovery, nor were they with the amount for which we were authorized to draw sufficient to obtain the object; the Chiefs knew the value of the land we asked for, and in consequence of this knowledge set a higher price upon it themselves. The Colberts wielded the Nation and of course laid several hundred per cent on their own influence. The reserves suggested themselves to us. There were Citizens whose interests in obtaining the cession was such as made them willing to advance on the reserve, but we thought it best to hold an election in the Government, and if it choose to make the advance, an assignment will be made on the Deed, which will be admitted to record in the County wherein the land lies, but if the Government does not approve of this measure, the Deed is to be delivered to James Jackson of Nashville, to whom it is made, who will advance the sum drawn for. We would suggest that Martin Colbert goes on to the City to await the ratification of the Treaty. Genl. Jackson has assured him that as soon as the ratification of the treaty takes place Mr. Thomas Kirkman will advance him the goods, and has instructed Mr. James Jackson to advise him accordingly. We can assure you that without this

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do[u]ceur we could not have obtained the treaty, and we have placed the land reserved, in a better state for the benefit of society, and the individual advancing the amount is willing to retain it, if the executive should think proper to make that election.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In the treaty certain lands are reserved to George and Levi Colbert. It seems to be the meaning of the writers of this letter that these lands could be had by the government to be set up in the ceded region if it chose—or if not James Jackson would take them. In either case the Colberts would receive a sum of money. Another “douceur” was that James Colbert, interpreter, should be paid \$1089.00, “it being the amount of a sum of money taken from his pocket in the month of June, 1816, at the theatre in Baltimore”.

By article 4 of the treaty a tract four miles square, on which was a salt lick, was reserved to Levi Colbert and James Brown, two chieftains, for the use of the nation. They leased this reservation to Jackson's close friend, Maj. Wm. B. Lewis, for 199 years, Lewis agreeing to pay the Indians 750 bushels of salt annually. The transaction afterwards was the occasion of much criticism, part of which fell on Jackson. The lease is preserved in the Tennessee State Library at Nashville, and with it is a memorandum signed by Colbert and Brown and dated Jan. 11, 1819, authorizing Lewis to enter on the said tract in pursuance of his lease. For subsequent history, *cf.* also Jackson to Eaton Nov. 29, 1819, p. 443, n. 1, *post*.

You will perceive by the transaction that we created a fund out of their own property to bring over the influence of the Nation and obtain this cession so important to the United States and to the Western World, for the strength of the population of the Country ceded will be sufficient for the defence of the West in the event of war in that Country, and the report of Major Lewis will show its extent and immense value. We trust you will see in our procedure all our genius and efforts used to obtain the object of our mission, and the means used by which we obtained success, we hope will be approved by the President.

The goods forwarded to the Bluff subject to our order we have agreeable to the instru[c]tions contained in your letter of the 29th of September, relative to those goods for

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the Annuity furnished Mr. Baleo, Sub factor with an extract, and directed him to hold them, subject to the Order of Mr. Mc. Kinney Superintendent of Indian Affairs we will conclude by remarking that there is a great saving by paying the Annuity in money, the enumeration being made the amount can be divided into shares as has been done at the last payment, be placed in the hands of the four Chiefs of the four different Departments, who can assemble the Indians of their respective Departments in their own neighbourhoods, and distribute the same to them without its costing the United States a single ration, when an annuity in goods will cost them half the amount of the goods in rations, and the poor of the Nation receive but little benefit therefrom, as there is always a great proportion of the goods lost or wasted as will be found in the instance of the goods lately sent on.

We are Sir, Very respectfully Your Obt. Servants